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Red Campaign

"An insidious, Moscow-fed campaign to bleed the life out of anti-communism in America is now beginning to pay off. Within the past year it has created such a climate of distrust and confusion that scores of reputable anti-Communist authorities find themselves tainted, suspect, under vicious attack."

So begins an important article in the May Reader's Digest, written by a former CIA officer who now is deputy director of the University of Pennsylvania's famed Foreign Policy Research Institute. Instead of removing the cause of frustration on which the extreme movements in the U.S. feed—frustration that arises from "years of confusion, contradiction and empty posturing that have marked our efforts against communism"—some of our highest officials are attacking experts on the Communist challenge.

As a result, says Professor William Kintner, "a deplorable set of double standards has developed. Persons who voice anti-Communist thoughts are reprimanded, while those who plead accommodation are rarely rebuked."

EXCEPT FOR a tendency to lump John Birch Society members—as distinct from the more widely quoted statements of its founder—into the extremist category (and thereby ignoring a report to the Fund for the Republic which said, "The John Birch Society chapters include respectable community leaders and solid citizens who feel that the basic doctrines if not the fringe issues of the right-wing coincide with their own"), Kintner's article is both accurate and revealing. It describes the 1960 meeting of 81 Communist chieftains who, after huddling for almost a month, issued a startling manifesto describing the anti-Communist movement as "the principal ideological weapon" of Communist opponents, and called on Communists around the world to participate in "exposing anti-communism."

On Jan. 6, 1961, Kintner says, Khrushchev summoned before him the elite of communism's psychological-warfare experts and told them the rising anti-Communist movement had to be destroyed, and he stressed the "necessity of establishing contacts with those circles of the bourgeoisie which gravitate toward pacifism." As defector MVD Col. Vladimir Petrov and CIA agents testified, dossiers in Moscow's espionage headquarters were combed for names of unsuspecting persons in the U.S. who might do the Kremlin's work—for political leaders of the extreme left who might fall for a made-in-Moscow line, for ultra-liberal newsmen who would innocently echo Red-inspired interpretations. And finally, the Kremlin experts on America screened conservatives, singling out extremists whose intemperance could be counted on to discredit all anti-Communists.

THE PRIMARY Red target, the author says, is the Pentagon. When it was revealed that General Walker was a member of the Birch Society, that provided their opening wedge. And it was "enough to set some of our most influential newspapers off on a chase to show, with slim pickings for proof, that numerous officers were indoctrinating their commands and the civilian population with Birch-type theories." In the midst of the shooting, which often missed the main target and strafed legitimate anti-Communists and educational programs with a spray of guilt by association, Sen. J. William Fulbright dispatched a memo to the Pentagon castigating the seminar program, culminating in a "go easy" policy on statements about communism and leading to cancellation of seminars on communism.

Unless the American people can realistically analyze together this total Communist threat, Kintner says, the Kremlin will watch its plan to paralyze us succeed, as we divide into a bitter civil war of words that will wreck national unity.